

"The clue, Carnes," said Dr. Bird slowly, "lies in those windows."

Operative Carnes of the United States Secret Service shook his head before he glanced at the windows of the famous scientist's private laboratory on the top floor of the Bureau of Standards.

Dr. Bird and his friend Carnes unravel another criminal web of scientific mystery.

"I usually defer to your knowledge, Doctor," he said, "but this time I think you are off on the wrong foot. If the thieves came in through the windows, what was their object in cutting that hole through the roof? The marks are very plain and they indicate that the hole was cut in some manner from the inside."

Dr. Bird smiled enigmatically.

"That is too evident for discussion," he replied. "I grant you that the thieves entered from the roof through that hole. After they had secured their booty they left by the same route. I presume that you have

noticed the marks on the roof where an aircraft of some sort, probably a helicopter, landed and took off. A question of much greater moment is that of what they did before they landed and cut the hole."

"I don't follow your reasoning, Doctor."

"Carnes, that hole was cut through the roof with a heavy saw. In cutting it, the workers dislodged quite a little plaster which fell to the floor and must have made a great deal of noise. Why wasn't that noise heard?"

"It was heard. The watchman heard it, but knew that Lieutenant Breslau was working here and he thought that he made the noise."

"Surely, but why didn't Breslau hear it?"

"How do we know that he didn't? He was taken to Walter Reed Hospital this morning with his mind an absolute blank and with his tongue paralyzed. He must have seen the thieves and they treated him in some way to ensure his silence. When he is able to

talk, if he ever is, he'll probably give us a good description of them."

Dr. Bird shook his head.

"Too thin, Carney, old dear," he said. "Breslau is a very intelligent young man. He was perfectly normal when I left him shortly after midnight last night. He was working alone in here on a device of the utmost military importance. On the desk is a push button which sets ringing a dozen gongs in the building. Surely a man of that type would have had sense enough when he heard and saw intruders cutting a hole through the roof to sound an alarm which would have brought every watchman on the grounds to his assistance. He must have been knocked out before the hole was started, probably before the helicopter's landing."

"How? Gas of some sort?"

"The windows were all closed and locked and I have already ascertained that the gas and water lines have not been tampered with. Gas won't penetrate through

a solid roof in sufficient concentration to knock out a man like that. It was something more subtle than gas."

"What was it?"

"I don't know yet. The clue to what it was lies, as I told you, in those windows."

Carnes moved over and surveyed the windows closely.

"I see nothing unusual about them except that they need washing rather badly."

"They were washed last Friday, but they do look rather dirty, don't they? Suppose you take a rag and some scouring soap and clean up a pane."

The detective took the proffered articles and started his task. He wet a pane of glass, rubbed up a thick lather of scouring soap and applied it and rubbed vigorously. With clear water he washed the glass and then gave an exclamation of astonishment and examined it more closely.

"That isn't dirt, Doctor," he cried. "The glass seems to be fogged."

Dr. Bird chuckled.

"So it seems," he admitted. "Now look at the rest of the glass around the laboratory."

Carnes looked around and then walked to a table littered with apparatus and examined a dozen pieces carefully.

"It's all fogged in exactly the same way, Doctor," he said. "The only piece of clear glass in the room is that piece of plate glass on your desk."

Dr. Bird picked up a hammer and struck the plate on his desk a sharp blow. Carnes ducked instinctively, but the hammer rebounded harmlessly from the plate.

"That isn't glass, Carnes," said the doctor. "That plate is made of vitrilene, a new product which I have developed. It looks like glass, but it has entirely different properties. It is of enormous strength and is

quite insensitive to shock. It has one most peculiar property. While ultra-violet and longer rays will penetrate it quite readily, it is a perfect screen for X-rays and other rays of shorter wave length. It appears to be the only piece of transparent substance in my laboratory which has not been fogged, as you call it."

"Do short waves fog glass, Doctor?"

"Not so far as I know at present, but you must remember that very little work has been done with the short wave-lengths. In the vast range of waves whose lengths lie between zero and that of the X-ray, only a few points have been investigated and definitely plotted. There may be in that range a wave-length which will fog glass."

"Then your theory is that some sort of a ray machine was put in operation before the helicopter landed?"

"It is too early to attempt any theorizing, Carnes. Let us confine ourselves to the known facts. Lieutenant Breslau was normal at midnight and was working in this room. Some time between then and seven this

morning he underwent certain mental and physical changes which prevent him from telling us what he observed. During the same period, a hole was cut in the roof and things of great importance stolen. At the same time, all the glass in the laboratory became semi-opaque. The problem is to determine what connection there is between the three events. I will handle the scientific end here, but there is some outside work to be done, and that will be your share."

"Give your orders, Doctor," said the detective briefly.

"To understand what I am driving at, I will have to tell you what has been stolen. Naturally this is highly confidential. Some rumors have leaked out as to my experiments with 'radite,' as I have named the new radium-containing disintegrating explosive on which I have been working, but no one short of the Secretary of War and the Chief of Ordnance and certain of their selected subordinates knows that my experiments have been successful and that the United States is in a position to manufacture radite in almost unlimited quantities from the pitchblende ore deposits of Wyoming and Nevada. The effects of radite will be

catastrophic on the unfortunate victim on whom it is first used. The only thing left to do was to develop a gun from which radite shells could be fired with safety and precision.

"Ordinary propellant powders are too variable for this purpose, but I found that radite B, one form of my new explosive, can be used for propelling the shells from a gun. The ordinary gun will last only two or three rounds, due to the erosive action of the radite charge on the barrel, and ordinary ordnance is heavier and more cumbersome than is necessary. When this was found to be the case, the Chief of Ordnance detailed Lieutenant Breslau, the army's greatest expert on gun design, to work with me in an attempt to develop a suitable weapon. Breslau is a wizard at that sort of work and he has made a miniature working model of a gun with a vitrilene-lined barrel which is capable of being fired with a miniature shell. The gun will stand up under the repeated firing of radite charges and is very light and compact and gives an accuracy of fire control heretofore deemed impossible. From this he planned

to construct a larger weapon which would fire a shell containing an explosive charge of two and one-half ounces of radite at a rate of fire of two hundred shots per minute. The destructive effect of each shell will be greater than that of the ordinary high-explosive shell fired from a sixteen-inch mortar, and all of the shells can be landed inside a two-hundred foot circle at a range of fifteen miles. The weight of the completed gun will be less than half a ton, exclusive of the firing platform. It is Breslau's working model which has been stolen."

Carnes whistled softly between his teeth.

"The matter will have to be handled pretty delicately to avoid international complications," he said. "It's hard to tell just where to look. There are a great many nations who would give any amount for a model of such a weapon."

"The matter must be handled delicately and also in absolute secrecy, Carnes. We are not yet ready to announce to the world the fact that we have such a weapon in our armory. It is the plan of the President

to have a half dozen of these weapons manufactured and give a demonstration of their terrible effectiveness to representatives of the powers of the world. Think what an argument the existence of such a weapon will be for the furtherance of his plans for disarmament and universal peace! Public sentiment will force disarmament on the world, for even the worst jingoist could no longer defend armaments in the face of America's offer to scrap these super-engines of destruction and to destroy the plans from which they were made. If the model has fallen into the hands of any civilized power the damage is not irreparable, for public opinion would force its surrender and return. It is among the uncivilized powers that our search must first be made."

"That makes the problem of where to start more complicated."

"On the contrary, it simplifies it immensely. At the head of the uncivilized powers stands one which has the brains, the scientific knowledge and the manufacturing facilities to make terrible use of such a weapon. In addition, the aim of that power is to

overthrow all world governments and set up in their stead its own tyrannical disorder. Need I name it?"

"You refer to Russia."

"Not to Russia, the great slumbering giant who will some day take her place in the sun in fellowship with the other nations, but to Bolsheviki, that empire within an empire, that horrible power which is holding sleeping Russia in chains of steel and blood. It is there that our search must first be made."

"Of course, they have no official representative in America."

"No, but the Young Labor Party is as much their accredited representative as the British Ambassador is of imperial Britain. Your first task will be to trail down and locate every leader of that group and to investigate his present activities."

"I can tell you where most of them are without investigation. Denberg, Semensky and Karuska are in

Atlanta; Fedorovitch and Caspar are in Leavenworth; Saranoff is dead—"

"Presumably."

"Why, Doctor, I saw with my own eyes the destruction of the submarine in which he was riding!"

"Did you see his dead body?"

"No."

"Neither did I, and I will never be sure until I do. Once before we were certain of his death, and he bobbed up with a new fiendish device. We cannot eliminate Saranoff."

"I will include him in my plans."

"Do so. Besides a hypothetical Saranoff, there are a half dozen or more of the old leaders of the gang who are alive and at liberty, so far as we know. They fled the country after the Coast Guard broke up their alien smuggling scheme, but some of them may have

returned. There are also thirty or forty underlings who should be located and checked up on, and, in addition, we must not lose sight of the fact that new heads of the organization may have been smuggled into the United States. It is no simple task that I am setting you, Carnes, but I know that you and Bolton will see it through if anyone can."

"Thanks, Doctor, we'll do our best. If I am not speaking out of turn, what are you planning to do in the mean time?"

"I am going to start Taylor off on an ultra-short wave generator and try a few experiments along that line. Breslau is at Walter Reed and they are doing all they can for him, but until I can get some definite information as to the underlying cause of his condition, they are more or less shooting in the dark."

"How are they treating him?"

"By electric stimulations and vibratory treatments and by keeping him in a darkened room. By the way, Carnes, if I am correct in my line of thought, it would

be well to have an extra guard put over Karuska. He was the only real expert in ordnance that the Young Labor party had, and if they have Breslau's model they'll need him to supervise the construction of a gun."

"I'll attend to that at once, Doctor. Is there anything else?"

"Not that I know of. I am going out to Takoma Park this afternoon and have another look at Breslau, but it is too soon to hope for any change in his condition. Aside from the time I will be out there, you can find me either here or at my home, in case anything develops."

"I'll get on the job at once, Doctor."

"Thanks, old dear. Remember that speed must be the keynote of your work."

The telephone bell at the head of Dr. Bird's bed woke into noisy activity. The doctor roused himself and took down the instrument sleepily. A glance at the clock

showed him that it was four in the morning and he muttered a malediction on the one who had called him.

"Hello," he said into the receiver. "Dr. Bird speaking."

"Doctor," came a crisp voice over the wire, "wake up! This is Carnes talking. Something has broken loose!"

All trace of sleep vanished from Dr. Bird's face and his eyes glowed momentarily with a peculiar glitter which Carnes would at once have recognized as indicative of the keenest interest.

"What has happened, Carnes?" he demanded.

"I telephoned Atlanta this morning and arranged to have an extra guard put over Karuska as you suggested. The matter was simplified by the fact that he and nine others were confined in the prison infirmary. The warden agreed to do as I told him, and, in addition to the regular guards, a special man was placed in the ward near Karuska's bed. At 2 A. M. the lights in the ward went out."

"Accidentally, or were they put out?"

"They haven't found out yet. At any rate they are all right now, but Karuska and all of the other inmates and all the guards of that particular ward have gone crazy."

"The dickens you say!"

"Not only that, they are also partially paralyzed. The description I got over the telephone corresponds exactly with the condition of Lieutenant Breslau as you described it to me. Here is the most interesting part of the whole affair. The special guard over Karuska was only lightly affected and has already recovered and is in a position to tell you exactly what happened. I got a garbled account of the affair from the warden, something about a goldfish bowl or something like that, the warden wouldn't take it seriously enough to give me details. I didn't press for them much for I knew that you would rather get them at first hand."

"I certainly would. I'll be ready to leave for Atlanta in less than ten minutes."

"I expected that, Doctor, and a car is already on its way to pick you up. I'll meet you at Langley Field where a plane is already being tuned up and will be ready to take off by the time we get there."

"Good work, Carnes. I'll see you at the field."

A car was waiting for Carnes and Dr. Bird when the Langley Field plane slid down to a landing at Atlanta. At the penitentiary, Dr. Bird went direct to the infirmary where Karuska had been confined. As he entered, he shot a keen glance around and gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Look at the windows, Carnes," he cried.

Carnes went over to the nearest window and moistened his finger tip and applied it experimentally to the glass. The moisture produced no effect, for the glass of the windows was permanently clouded as was that of the doctor's laboratory.

"Whatever happened in my laboratory the night before last was repeated here last night with a similar object," said the doctor. "The object there was to steal a gun model; here it was to steal a man who could construct a full-sized gun from the model. I understand that one of the guards escaped the fate which overtook the rest of the persons in the infirmary?"

"Not altogether, Doctor," replied the warden. "I think that his mind is somewhat affected, for he tells a wild yarn and insists on trying to wear a goldfish bowl on his head. I have him under observation in the psychopathic ward."

Dr. Bird shot a scornful glance at the warden.

"'There are none so blind as those who will not see'," he murmured.

"By all means, I wish to see him," he went on aloud.

"Will you have him brought here at once, please?"

The warden nodded and spoke to one of the attendants. In a few moments a tall, fair-haired young giant stood before the doctor. Dr. Bird pushed back his unruly shock of black hair with his fingers, those long slim mobile fingers which alone betrayed the artist in his make-up, and shot a piercing glance from his black eyes into the blue ones, which returned the gaze unabashed.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Bailey, sir."

"You were on guard here last night?"

"Yes, sir. I was detailed as a special guard over No. 9764."

"Tell me in your own words just what happened. Don't be afraid to speak out; I'm not going to disbelieve you; and above all, tell me everything, no matter how unimportant it may seem to you. I'll judge the importance of things for myself. I'm Dr. Bird of the Bureau of Standards."

The guard's face lighted up at the doctor's words.

"I've heard of you, Doctor," he said in a relieved tone, "and I'll be glad to tell you everything. At ten o'clock last night, I relieved Carragher as special guard over No. 9764. Carragher reported that the prisoner was somewhat restless and hadn't been asleep as yet. I sat down about fifteen feet from his bed and prepared to keep an eye on him until I was relieved at six o'clock this morning.

"Nothing happened until about two o'clock. No. 9764 was restless as Carragher had said, but toward midnight he quieted down and apparently went to sleep. I was sleepy myself, and I got up and took a turn around the room every five minutes to be sure that I kept awake. That's how I am so sure of the time, sir."

Dr. Bird nodded.

"At five minutes to two, just as I got up, I heard a noise outside like a big electric fan. It sounded like it came from directly overhead and I went to the

window and looked out. I couldn't see anything, although I could hear it pretty plainly, and then I heard a noise like something had fallen on the roof. Almost at the same time there came a sort of high-pitched whine, a good deal like the noise an electric motor makes when it is running at high speed.

"I thought of giving an alarm, but I didn't want to stir things up unless I was sure that there was some necessity for it, so I started for the door to ask one of the outside guards if he had heard anything. As I turned toward No. 9764 I saw that he had been sitting up in bed while my back was turned. As soon as he saw that I noticed him, he lay back real quick and pulled the covers over his head. He moved pretty quick, but not so quick that I couldn't see that he had something that glittered like glass before his face. I started over toward his bed to see what he was doing and then it was that the lights started to get dim!"

"Go on!" said the doctor as Bailey paused. His eyes were glittering brightly now.

"Well, sir, Doctor, I don't hardly know how to describe what happened next. The lights were getting dim, but not as they ordinarily do when the current starts to go off. The filaments were shining as bright as they ever did, but the light didn't seem to be able to penetrate the air. The whole room seemed to be filled with a blackness that stopped the light. No, sir, it wasn't like fog; it was more like something more powerful than the lights was in the room and was killing them.

"It wasn't only the lights which were affected, it was me as well. This blackness, whatever it was, was getting into me as well as into the room, and I couldn't seem to make myself think like I wanted to. I tried to yell to give an alarm, and I found that I could hardly whisper. I went toward the bed and then I saw No. 9764 sit up again. He had a goldfish bowl pulled down over his head and it was evident that it was keeping the blackness away, for I could see him plainly and his eyes were as bright as ever.

"The nearer I got to him, the funnier I felt, and I began to be afraid that I would go out. No. 9764 got up out of bed, and I could see him grinning at me

through the bowl. He reached up and adjusted that bowl, and all of a sudden I realized that whatever was knocking me out was not affecting him because he had that thing on. I jumped for him with the idea of taking the bowl off and putting it on my own head. He saw what I was up to and he fought like a cornered rat, but the blackness hadn't affected my muscles. I'm a pretty big man, sir, and No. 9764 is a little runt, and it didn't take me long to get the bowl off his head and pulled on over mine. As soon as I did that, I seemed to be able to think clearer. I was sitting on No. 9764 and was ready to tap him with a persuader if he started anything, but I didn't have to. In a few minutes he stopped struggling and lay perfectly quiet.

"The lights kept getting dimmer and dimmer until they went out altogether and the room became pitch dark. It wasn't exactly as if the lights had gone out, sir; I seemed to know that they were still there and were burning as bright as ever, but they couldn't penetrate the blackness in the room, if you understand what I mean."

"I think I do," said Dr. Bird slowly. "It was a good deal as if you had seen a glass filled with a pale red liquid and someone had dumped black ink into the fluid and hid the red color. You would know that the red was still there, but you wouldn't be able to see it through the black."

"That's exactly what it was like, Doctor; you have described it better than I can. At any rate, after it got real dark I heard a low whistle from the roof. No. 9764 made a struggle to get up for a moment and then lay quiet again. The whistle sounded again and then I heard some one call 'Caruso.' Everything was quiet for a while and then the same voice called again and said some stuff in a foreign language that I couldn't understand. I kept perfectly quiet to see what would happen.

"For about ten minutes the room remained perfectly dark, as I have said, and all the while I could hear that whining noise. All of a sudden it began to sound in a lower note and then I could see the lights again, very dimly and like the black ink you spoke of was fading out. The note got lower until it stopped

altogether, and the lights came on brighter until they were normal again. Then I heard a scraping noise on the roof and the noise I had heard at first like a big electric fan. I looked at the clock. It was two-twenty.

"For a few minutes I wasn't able to collect my wits. When I got up off of No. 9764 at last he stared at me as though he didn't know a thing, and I heaved him back into his bed and ran to the door to summon an outside guard. I could still talk in a husky whisper, but not loud, and I wasn't surprised when no one heard me. My orders were not to let No. 9764 out of my sight, but this was an emergency, so I left the ward and found a guard. It was Madigan and he was standing on his beat staring at nothing. When I touched him he looked at me and there was the same vacant look in his eyes that I had seen in the prisoner's. I talked to him in a whisper, but he didn't seem to understand, so I left him and went to a telephone and called for help. Mr. Lawson, the warden, got here with guards in a couple of minutes and I tried to tell him what had happened, but I

couldn't talk loud, and I was afraid to take the fish bowl off my head."

"What happened next?"

"Mr. Lawson took me to his office, and on the way we passed under an arc light. As soon as I got under it I begin to feel better, and my voice came stronger. I saw that it was doing me some good and I stopped under it for an hour before my voice got back to normal. It seemed to clear the fog from my brain, too, and I was able, about four o'clock, to tell everything that had happened. Mr. Lawson seemed to think that my brain was affected as well as the others' and he sent me to the hospital. That's all, Doctor."

"Do you feel perfectly normal now?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is no need for confining this man longer, Mr. Lawson. He is as well as he ever was. Carnes, get the Walter Reed Hospital on the telephone and tell them that I said to treat Lieutenant Breslau with light rays,

rich in ultra-violet. Tell them to give him an overdose of them and not to put goggles on him. Keep him in the sun all day and under sun-ray arcs at night until further orders. Mr. Lawson, give the same treatment to the men who were disabled last night. If you haven't enough sun-ray arcs in your hospital, put them under an ordinary arc light in the yard. Bailey, have you still got that goldfish bowl?"

"It is in my office, Doctor," said the warden.

"Good enough! Send for it at once. By the way, you have two more communists here, Denberg and Semensky, haven't you?"

"I think so, although I will have to consult the records before I can be positive."

"I am sure that you have. Look the matter up and let me know."

The warden hurried away to carry out the doctor's orders, and an orderly appeared in a few moments with a hollow globe made of some crystalline

transparent substance. Despite its presence in the infirmary the evening before, there was no trace of clouding apparent. Dr. Bird took it and examined it critically. He rapped it with his knuckles and then stepped to the door and hurled it violently down on the concrete floor of the yard. The globe rebounded without injury and he caught it.

"Vitrilene, or a good imitation of it," he remarked to Carnes. "After you get through talking to the hospital, get Taylor on the wire. There is plenty of loose vitrilene in the Bureau, and I want him to send down about fifty square feet of it by a special plane at once."

As Carnes left the room, the warden reappeared.

"The men are all lying in the sun now, Doctor," he said. "I find that we have the two men you mentioned confined here. They are both in Tier A, Building 6."

"Is that an isolated building?"

"No, it is one wing of the old main building."

"On which floor?"

"The second floor. It is a six-story building."

"Have they been moved there recently?"

"They have been there for nearly a year."

"In that case there will be little chance of another attack of this sort to-night. At the same time, I would advise you to station extra guards there to-night and every night until I notify you otherwise. Caution them to watch the lights carefully and to give an alarm at once if they appear to get dim. In such a case, send men to the roof with rifles with orders to shoot to kill anyone they find there. I am going back to Washington and I am going to take Karuska, your No. 9764 with me. You had better have one of the guards in the corridor, where Denberg and Semensky are, wear this goldfish bowl, as you call it. A lot of plate glass—at least it will look like that—will come from Washington by plane. Cut it into sheets a foot square and use surgeon's plaster to make some temporary glass helmets for your men. I want all your guards to

wear them until I either settle this matter or else send you some better helmets. Do you understand?"

"I understand all right, but I'm afraid that I can't do it. The wearing of such appliances would interfere with the efficiency of my men as guards."

"Brain and tongue paralysis would interfere rather more seriously, it seems to me. In any event, I have sufficient authority to enforce my request. If you are at all doubtful, call up the Attorney General and ask him."

The warden hesitated.

"If you don't mind, I think I will call Washington, Doctor," he said. "I will have to get authority to turn No. 9764 over to you in any event."

"Call all you wish, Mr. Lawson. Mr. Carnes is talking to Washington now and we'll have a clear line through for you in a few minutes. Meanwhile, get a set of shackles on Karuska and get him ready to travel by plane. He appears to be suffering from mental

paralysis, but I don't know how his case will develop. He may go violently insane at any moment and I don't care to be aloft in a plane with an unbound maniac."

Major Martin looked up from the prone figure of Karuska.

"His condition duplicates that of Lieutenant Breslau, Dr. Bird," he said. "We received your telephoned message this afternoon and we kept Breslau in a flood of sunlight until dusk, and then put him under sun-ray lamps. I don't know how you got on to that treatment, but it is having a very beneficial effect. He can already make inarticulate sounds, and his eyes are not quite as vacant as they were. If he keeps on improving as he has, he should be able to talk intelligently in a few days. If you wish to question this man, why not give him the same treatment?"

"I haven't time, Major. I must make him talk to-night if it is humanly possible. I called you in because you are the most eminent authority on the brain in the government service. Is there any way of artificially

stimulating this man's brain so that we can force the secrets of his subconscious mind from him?"

The major sat for a moment in profound thought.

"There *is* a way, Doctor," he said at length, "but it is a method which I would not dare to use. By applying high frequency electrical stimulations to the medulla oblongata, at the same time bathing the cerebellum with ultra-violet, it might be done, but the chances are that either death or insanity would result. I would not do it."

"Major Martin, this man is a reckless and dangerous international criminal. If his gang carries out the plan which I fear they have formed, the lives of thousands, yes, of millions, may pay for your hesitation. I will assume full responsibility for the test if you will make it, and I have the authority of the President of the United States behind me."

"In that case, Doctor, I have no choice. The President is the Commander-in-chief of the army, and if those are his orders the experiment will be carried out. As a

matter of form, I will ask that your orders be reduced to writing."

"I will write them gladly, Major. Please proceed with the experiment without delay."

Major Martin bowed and spoke to a waiting orderly. The prostrate figure of Karuska was wheeled down a corridor into the electrical laboratory, and with the aid of the laboratory technician the surgeon made his preparations. The Moss lamp was arranged to throw a flood of ultra-violet over the Russian's cranium while the leads from a deep therapy X-ray tube was connected, one to the front of Karuska's throat and the other to the base of his brain. At a signal from the major, a nurse began to administer ether.

"I guarantee nothing, Dr. Bird," said the major. "The paralysis of the vocal cords may be physical, in which case the victim will still be unable to speak, regardless of the brain stimulation. If, however, the evident paralysis is due to some obscure influence on the brain, it may work."

"In any, event I will hold you blameless and thank you for your help," replied the doctor. "Please start the stimulation."

Major Martin closed a switch, and the hum of a high tension alternator filled the laboratory. The Russian quivered for a moment and then lay still. Major Martin nodded and Dr. Bird stepped to the side of the operating table.

"Ivan Karuska," he said slowly and distinctly, "do you hear me?"

The Russian's lips quivered and an unintelligible murmur came from them.

"Ivan Karuska," repeated Dr. Bird, "do you hear me?"

There was a momentary struggle on the part of the Russian and then a surprisingly clear voice came from his lips.

"I do."

"Who is the present head of the Young Labor party?"

Again there was a pause before the name "Saranoff" came from the lips of the insensible figure. Carnes gave a sharp exclamation but a gesture from the doctor silenced him.

"Is Saranoff alive?"

"Yes."

"Is he in the United States?"

"No, he is in London."

"Is he coming to the United States?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"I don't know. Soon. As soon as we are ready for him."

"Where is he living in London?"

"I don't know."

"How did you get word that you were to be rescued from Atlanta?"

"A message was smuggled in to me by O'Grady, a guard in our pay."

"What was that vitrilene helmet for?"

"To protect me from the effects of the black lamp."

"What is the black lamp?"

"I don't know exactly. Saranoff invented it. It gives a black light and it kills all other light except sunlight, and it paralyses the brain."

"Did you know that the model of the Breslau gun had been stolen?"

"Yes."

"What were you going to do after you were rescued from jail?"

"I was going to make a full-sized gun. We have a disappearing gun platform built in the swamps at the juncture of the Potomac and Piscataway Creek. The gun was to be mounted there and we would shell Washington and institute a reign of terror. It would be a signal for uprisings all over the country."

"Is there a black lamp at that gun platform?"

"Yes. The black lamp will kill both the flash and the report."

"Where did you get the formula for radite?"

"We got it from one of Dr. Bird's assistants. His name —"

As he spoke the last few sentences, Karuska's voice had steadily risen almost to a shriek. As he endeavored to give the name of the doctor's treacherous helper his voice changed to an unintelligible screech and then died away into silence. Major Martin stepped forward and bent over the prone figure. Hurriedly he tore away the electrical

connections and placed a stethoscope over the Russian's heart. He listened for a moment and then straightened up, his face pale.

"I hope that the information you obtained is worth a life, Dr. Bird," he said, his voice trembling slightly, "because it has cost one."

"It may easily save thousands of lives. I thank you, Major, and I will see that no blame attaches to you for your actions. I only wish that he had lived long enough to tell me the name of my assistant who has sold me to Saranoff. However, we'll get that information in other ways. Carnes, telephone Lawson at Atlanta to slam O'Grady into a cell pending investigation while I get Camp Meade on the wire and order up a couple of tanks. We are going to attack that gun emplacement at daybreak."

The telephone bell in the laboratory jangled sharply. Major Martin answered it and turned to Carnes.

"You're wanted on the telephone, Mr. Carnes."

The detective stepped forward and took the transmitter.

"Carnes speaking," he said. "Yes. Oh, hello, Bolton. Yes, we have Karuska here, or rather his body. Yes, Dr. Bird is here right now. You've what? Great Scott, wait a minute."

"Dr. Bird," he cried eagerly turning from the telephone, "Bolton has located the Washington headquarters of the Young Labor party."

Dr. Bird sprang to the instrument.

"Bird speaking, Bolton," he cried. "You've located their headquarters? Who's running it? Stanesky, eh? You're on the right track; he used to be Saranoff's right hand man. Where is the place located? I don't seem to recollect the spot. You have it well surrounded? Where are you speaking from? All right, we'll join you as quickly as we can. Keep your patrols out and don't let anyone get away."

He hung up the receiver and turned to Carnes.

"Did you have the car wait?" he asked. "Good enough; we'll jump for the Bureau and pick up all the vitrilene laying around loose and then join Bolton. He thinks that he has the whole outfit bottled up."

Bolton was waiting as the car rolled up and Dr. Bird leaped out.

"Where are they?" demanded the doctor eagerly.

"In an abandoned factory building about three hundred yards from here," replied the Chief of the Secret Service. "I traced them through New York. We have been watching the place ever since yesterday noon, and I know that Stanesky is in there with half a dozen others. No one has tried to leave since we set our watch. One funny thing has happened. About an hour ago a peculiar red glow suffused the whole building. It has died down a good deal since, but we can still see it through the windows. Could you tell us what it means?"

"No. I couldn't, Bolton, but we'll find out. How many men have you?"

"I have sixteen stationed around."

"That's more than we'll need. I have only vitrilene shields and helmets enough to equip six men. Pick out your three best men to go with us and we'll make a try at entering."

Bolton strode off into the darkness and returned in a few moments with three men at his heels. Dr. Bird spoke briefly to the operatives, all of them men who had been his companions on other adventures. He explained the need for the vitrilene helmets and shields, and without comment the six donned their armor and followed Bolton as he strode toward the building. As they approached, a dull red glow could be plainly seen through the windows, and Dr. Bird paused and studied the phenomenon for a moment.

"I don't know what that means, Bolton," he said softly, "but I don't like the looks of it. Stanesky is up to some devilment or other. I wouldn't be a bit surprised to find out that he knows all about your pickets and is ready for a raid."

"We'd better rush the place, then," muttered Bolton.

Dr. Bird nodded agreement and with a sharp command to his men Bolton broke into a run. Not a shot was fired as they approached, and the front door gave readily to Bolton's touch. At it opened there came a grating sound from the roof followed by the whir of a propeller. Dr. Bird ran out of the building and glanced up.

"A helicopter!" he cried. "They were expecting us and have escaped!"

He drew his pistol and fired ineffectually at the great bird-like ship which was rising almost noiselessly into the air. He cursed and turned again to the building.

Bolton still stood in the room which they had first entered. His flashlight showed it to be empty, but from under a door on the opposite side a line of dull red light glowed evilly. With his pistol ready in his hand, Bolton approached the door on hands and knees. When he reached it he threw his shoulder against it and dropped flat to the floor as the door

swung open. No shot greeted him, and he stared for a moment and then rose to his feet.

"Nothing in here but some glass statues," he announced.

Dr. Bird followed him into the room. As he looked at what Bolton had called glass statues he gasped and shielded his eyes.

"God in Heaven!" he ejaculated. "Those were living men!"

Before them were three men or what had been three men. All stood in strained attitudes with a look of horror frozen on their faces. The thing that made the spectators shudder was that their bodies had, by some diabolical method, been rendered semi-transparent. The dull red light which suffused the room emanated from the three bodies. Dr. Bird examined them closely, being careful not to touch them.

"The identity of my treacherous assistant is known," he said grimly as he pointed at the middle figure. "It was Gerond. What is this?"

He took an envelope from the hand of the middle figure and opened it. A sheet of paper fell out and he picked it up and read it.

"My dear Mr. Bolton," ran the note. "Your methods of tracing and picketing my headquarters are so crude as to be almost laughable. This base has served its purpose and we were ready to abandon it in any event, but I couldn't resist the temptation to let you almost nab us. The three men whom you will find here are agents who failed in their duty. If you are interested in learning the method of their execution, you might take to heart the words of your colleague, Dr. Bird: 'The clue lies in those windows.'"

Carnes glanced at the windows and gave a cry of surprise. The glass was opaque, as had been the glass in the doctor's laboratory and the glass in the infirmary at Atlanta. The fogging however, was much more pronounced, and the opaque glass gave faintly

the same red effulgence which came from the three bodies.

"What does it mean, Doctor?" he asked.

"I don't know, Carnes," said Dr. Bird slowly. "I foresee that I am going to have to do a great deal of work on short wave-lengths soon. It is doubtless the effect of some modification of the black lamp which has done it. Look out!"

He leaped to one side as he spoke, drawing Bolton and Carnes with him. A panel in the side of the wall opposite the doorway had slid silently open and through the opening poured out a beam of fiery red. Full on the three bodies it fell, and then spread out to fill the room. Dr. Bird had drawn the two nearest men out of the direct beam, but one of the secret service men stood full in its path. In the excitement of entering he had dropped his vitrilene shield and the livid ray fell full on his defenceless body. As they watched an expression of horror spread over his face and he strove to move to one side, but he was held helpless. Slowly he stiffened; and, as the ray bored

through him, his body became semi-transparent and the same dull red glow which emanated from the three bodies they had found began to shine forth from him. Bolton strove to break from the doctor's grasp and rush to the rescue but Dr. Bird held him with a grip of iron.

"Too late," he said grimly. "Chalk up another murder to the arch fiend who has committed the others. I don't know the nature of that ray and vitrilene may not be an adequate defence against its full force. We had better get out of here and attack the place from the rear."

Carefully edging their way around the sides of the room, the five men made their way out through the door. Dr. Bird slammed the door shut behind him and led the way out of the building and around to the rear. A door loomed before them and he cautiously tried it. It gave to his touch and he entered. As he set his foot on the threshold a terrific explosion came from the interior of the building.

"Run!" he shouted as he led the way in retreat. "If that is a radite explosion it will act for several seconds!"

From a safe distance they watched. One corner of the building had been torn off by the force of the explosion, and as they watched the rest of the building gradually collapsed and sank into a pile of ruins.

"They had planned on a visit from us all right," said Dr. Bolton grimly. "They had a surprise for us any way we jumped. If we went in the front door, that devil's ray was to finish us, and if we went in the back door the whole place was arranged to blow up as we entered. I only hope that Stanesky thinks that he has got us all and doesn't expect an attack on his next base in the morning. If he doesn't, I think we may give him a rather unpleasant surprise. Of course, that lamp is smashed into atoms and buried under the debris, but I don't know what other devil's contraptions that ruin holds. Bolton, have your men picket it and allow no one near until I get back. I've

got to get to a telephone and get a couple of tanks from Meade and a plane or two from Langley Field."

Two tanks made their way slowly across country. The front of each tank was protected by a heavy sheet of vitrilene, while from the turrets of the tanks projected the wicked looking muzzles of thirty-seven millimeter guns. Overhead two airplanes from Langley Field soared, scouting the country. Dr. Bird and Carnes rode in the leading tank.

"It ought to be somewhere near here, unless Karuska lied," said Carnes as he swept the country with a pair of binoculars.

"He didn't lie," returned Dr. Bird. "It was his subconscious mind that spoke and it never lies. He spoke of the gun emplacement as being in a swamp and I have a strong idea that it is submersible. Of course, it is bound to be well camouflaged, both from land and from air observation."

The planes circled around again and again, quartering the air like a pair of well-trained bird dogs

will quarter a hunting field. First high and then low they swooped back and forth, the tanks lumbering slowly along in the same direction. Presently the occupants of the leading tank saw one of the planes bank sharply and swing around. It dropped to an altitude of only a few hundred feet and turned and went back over the ground it had just crossed.

"I believe that fellow sees something!" exclaimed Carnes.

As he spoke, three green Very lights came from the cockpit of the plane. The tank driver gave a grunt of satisfaction and turned the nose of his vehicle in that direction. The second tank followed.

Hardly had they turned in the new direction before the ground began to get soft under their tracks and the heavy vehicles began to sink. The driver of the Doctor's tank forced it ahead, but the tank sank deeper in the mire until water flowed in around the feet of the occupants.

"I reckon we'll have to get out and walk pretty soon, Doctor," said the driver.

Dr. Bird grunted in acquiescence. The tank made its way forward a few yards before the engine sputtered and died. The second tank stopped when the first one did, fifty yards behind it. Donning vitrilene helmets and taking vitrilene shields in their hands, the crews of both tanks climbed out into the waist-deep water and gathered around the Doctor for orders.

"Form a skirmish line at ten-pace intervals and cross the swamp," he directed. "We may meet with no opposition, but if there is, the more scattered we are, the safer we will be. You all have hand grenades as well as your rifles?"

A murmur of assent answered him and the line formed and started across the swamp. They had gone perhaps a hundred yards when three red lights came from one of the planes circling overhead.

"Down!" cried the doctor, dropping to his knees in the muck.

Four hundred yards ahead of them a concrete platform emerged from the marsh and rose slowly into the air. It was roofed with a dome of what looked like plate glass, but which the doctor shrewdly suspected was vitrilene. When the base of the platform was two-feet above the level of the water the dome slid silently aside disclosing two men bending over a tiny gun. Dr. Bird leveled his binoculars.

"That's the Breslau gun model that was stolen as sure as I'm a foot high!" he cried. "They must have made some miniature shells and be planning to fire it."

Slowly a pall of intense blackness rose from the marsh and enveloped the platform and hid it from view. A whining noise came from overhead, and then a crash like a thunderbolt. The blast of the explosion threw the attackers face down in the swamp, and when they arose and looked back there was merely a gaping hole where the leading tank had been. The second tank suddenly seemed to rise in the air and fly into millions of tiny fragments, and a second thunderous blast sent them again to their knees.

"Radite!" bellowed Dr. Bird to Carnes. "Imagine the effect if that had been a full charge fired from a completed Breslau gun! Watch the planes, now. I think they are going to drop a few eggs on them."

The black mist cleared as if by magic and the platform was in plain view. The big glass dome rolled back into place as the two planes swept over at an elevation of two thousand feet. From each one a small black cigar-shaped object was released and fell in a long parabola toward the earth. The glass dome which had been closing over the gun platform rolled quickly back and a long beam of intense blackness pierced the heavens. First one and then the other of the falling bombs disappeared from view into it, and then the black column faded from view. The two bombs fell with increasing speed but the dome closed over the platform before they struck. The two hit the dome at almost the same instant and instead of the blinding crash they expected, the watchers saw the bombs rebound from the dome and fall harmlessly into the water.

"Stymied!" muttered the doctor. "I wonder what other properties that confounded lamp has."

He resumed his advance, Carnes and the soldiers keeping abreast of him. When they were within two hundred yards of the platform it rose again and the transparent dome rolled back. A beam of black shot forth over the swamp, searching them out and hiding them from view. First one and then another felt the effects of the black beam; but the vitrilene which the Doctor had provided stood them in good stead, and, aside from a slight shortening of their breath, none of the attackers felt any the worse.

"Come on, men!" cried the Doctor as his athletic figure plowed forward through the breast-deep water. "That is their worst weapon and it is harmless against us!"

Cheering, they fought their way toward the platform. It sunk for a moment and then rose again. As the dome swung back a sharp crackle of machine-gun fire sounded and the water before them was whipped into

foam by the plunging bullets. One of the soldiers gave a sharp cry and slumped forward into the water.

"Fire at will!" shouted the lieutenant in command.

A crackle of rifle fire answered the tattoo of the machine-gun, and the sharp ping of bullets striking on the dome could be plainly heard. An occasional shot kicked up a spurt of white dust from the concrete, but the machine-gun kept up a steady rattle of fire and the soldiers kept their heads almost at the level of the water. There came the roar of an airplane motor, and one of the planes swept over the platform, a hundred yards in the air, with two machine-guns spraying streams of bullets onto the platform. Two men abandoned their machine-gun and crouched under the partially folded-back dome as the second plane swept over, and Dr. Bird took advantage of the lull to advance his party a few yards nearer. Again the defenders of the platform rushed to their gun, but the first plane had turned and swooped down with both guns going, and again they were forced to take shelter while the Doctor and his force made another advance.

The second plane had turned and followed the first, but the defenders had had enough. The transparent dome closed over them and the platform sank into the marsh. With a shout, Dr. Bird led the way forward again.

The attackers were within a hundred yards of the platform when it again rose above the surface of the water. The guns had disappeared, but in their place stood an airship. It was a small affair with stubby wings above which were two helicopter blades revolving at high speed. No sound of a motor could be heard.

The transparent dome rolled back and like a bullet the little craft shot into the air, followed by a futile volley from the soldiers. Hardly had it appeared than the two airplanes bore down on it with machine-guns going. The helicopter paid no attention to them for a moment, and then came a puff of smoke from its side. The leading plane swerved sharply and the helicopter fired again. The leading plane maneuvered about, trying to get a machine-gun to bear, while the second plane climbed swiftly to get above the helicopter and

pour a deadly stream of fire down into it. It gained position and swooped down to the attack, but another puff of smoke came from the side of the helicopter and there was a thunderous report and a blinding flash in the sky. As the smoke cleared away, no trace of the ill-fated plane could be seen. The helicopter hung motionless in the air as though daring the remaining plane to attack.

The plane accepted the challenge and bore down at full speed on the stranger. Again came a puff of smoke, but the plane swerved and an answering shot came from its side. It was above the helicopter, and the shell which missed its mark plunged to the ground. When it struck there came a roar and a flash and the whole earth seemed to shake. The helicopter shot upward into the air and forward, both its elevating fans and its propellers whirling blurs of light. The airplane followed at its sharpest climbing angle, but was helpless to compete with its swifter climbing rival.

"He's got away!" groaned Carnes.

"Not yet, old dear!" cried the Doctor hopping with excitement. "He isn't safe yet. I never told you, but one Breslau gun had been made and it is on that plane. It has deadly accuracy and is good for fifteen miles. That's Lieutenant Dreen at the controls and Mason at the gun."

As he spoke the plane swung around and made a half loop. For a few yards it flew upside down and then whirled swiftly. As it turned there came a sharp report and a puff of smoke from its rear cockpit. High above, the helicopter had ceased climbing and hovered motionless. As the plane fired, the helicopter shot forward like an arrow from a bow, and thereby spelled its doom. Not for nothing did Captain Mason bear the title of the best aerial gunner in the Air Corps. He had foreseen what the action of his opponent would be and had allowed for just such a move. Far up in the sky came a blinding flash and a cloud of smoke. When the smoke cleared the sky was empty, except for a little scattered debris falling slowly to the ground.

"And that's that!" exclaimed Dr. Bird as he finished his examination of the underground laboratory with

which the gun platform connected. "The lamp has gone to glory with Breslau's gun model and two of the best brains of the Young Labor party. I am sure that Stanesky was one of those two men. I wish the whole gang had been on board."

"Don't you think that this is the end of it, Doctor?" asked Carnes.

"No, Carnes, I don't. We know that the real brains of this outfit is Saranoff, and Saranoff is still alive. He probably won't try to use his black lamp again, because I will have a defence against it in a short time, now that I have seen it in action, but he'll try something else. The whole object of life to a loyal citizen of Bolshevikia is to reduce the whole world to the barbarous level in which they hold Russia, and they will spare no pains or effort to accomplish it. The greatest obstacle to their success at present is the President of the United States. He is loved and respected by the whole world, and if he is spared he will forge the world into a great machine for the preservation of peace and universal good will. That would be fatal to Bolshevikia's plans, and they will

spare no effort to remove him. By the grace of God, we have saved him from harm so far, but until we remove Saranoff permanently from the scene, I will never feel safe for him."

"What do you suppose they'll try next, Doctor?"

"That, Carnes, time alone will tell."